

Inspection of Spennithorne Church of England Primary School

Spennithorne, Leyburn, North Yorkshire DL8 5PR

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 October 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils who attend this school in key stage 2 are educated on the site of the partner school in the federation, Middleham Church of England Aided School. The two schools operate as one school split across two sites. Pupils enjoy regular 'federation days', when all pupils from both schools come together. This contributes to the safe, welcoming and family feeling across both schools.

Pupils love coming to school and attend well. They work hard in lessons and listen carefully to their teachers. Leaders, including governors, have high expectations of pupils. Recent changes to the curriculum have led to improvements in pupils' achievement. Pupils are prepared well for their next steps in education.

Pupils look after one another. They play well together and help each other in lessons. Pupils know that bullying is not acceptable. Leaders have effective systems to manage it, should it happen. Pupils are confident that adults will help them if they have any worries.

Pupils have a range of opportunities to take on leadership roles as school councillors, collective worship leaders and play leaders. The school council recently led a donation drive for refugees from Ukraine. Pupils can develop their talents and interests in a wide range of clubs, such as music club, eco-club and sports club.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Children make a good start in early years. Staff are kind and nurturing, which helps children to settle into school. Teachers plan effective activities for children to explore and deepen their learning. For example, following a visit from a dental nurse, teachers created a role-play area where children learn more about cleaning their teeth. Staff help children to learn new vocabulary and to express their knowledge using these words.

Pupils are enthusiastic readers. They develop a broad understanding of a range of books and authors. Staff are well trained and receive ongoing coaching from the reading leader. Through these actions, leaders assure themselves that the curriculum is well taught. Teachers support pupils well in lessons, checking carefully to make sure that they are keeping up with the pace of learning. Pupils who need extra help receive this in additional reading sessions. As a result, pupils quickly learn to read.

In mathematics, leaders have introduced an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum. Staff have received training from an external specialist and the subject leader for mathematics. This has improved staff's subject knowledge. Teachers explain new concepts clearly, using pictures and mathematical apparatus to develop pupils' understanding. However, systems for checking pupils' prior knowledge are not sufficiently well embedded. This means that occasionally, some teachers do not plan lessons that build well on what pupils know and can do.

Leaders are working to further strengthen the curriculum for subjects such as history and science. Curriculum plans clearly identify the precise knowledge that pupils should learn. Subject leaders are now beginning to monitor the teaching of their new curriculum plans. Occasionally, teachers do not plan activities that place enough emphasis on the most important subject knowledge. As a result, sometimes pupils do not securely learn the most important knowledge that they need to prepare them for the next stage of learning.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have provided training to ensure that teachers understand how to help pupils with SEND in lessons. Adult support is used well to help ensure that all pupils can access the full curriculum offer.

Leaders ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Through a carefully crafted curriculum for personal, social and health education, pupils learn about healthy relationships and those who are different from themselves. Pupils show empathy and genuine respect for others. Some pupils found a recent visit from a representative of the Islamic faith particularly interesting and were able to demonstrate a depth of understanding about this faith.

The governing body has led strategic changes that have stabilised the school and its finances. The governing body is currently working with a national leader of governance to ensure that it provides rigorous challenge to school leaders about the quality of education in the school.

Incisive self-evaluation and precise planning for improvement have led to recent improvements in the school. Leaders are considerate of staff well-being. Staff appreciate the wealth of professional development provided. Leaders are committed to developing subject leaders' expertise and have sought training from external providers. Effective support is provided for teachers at the beginning of their career.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders carry out thorough checks on the suitability of adults working on site. Staff know how to identify concerns about pupils' safety and how to communicate these to leaders. Leaders take appropriate action, working with external agencies when necessary, to help keep pupils safe.

Pupils learn about how to be safe when using the internet. Leaders have also considered the local risks to pupils and ensure that pupils are equipped to manage these. For example, pupils learn about water safety because of the school's proximity to a river.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Systems to check pupils' prior knowledge are not consistently well established. Occasionally, some teachers do not have the information they need to inform their decisions about what pupils should learn next. Leaders should strengthen systems for assessment and ensure that teachers use this information, in conjunction with the school's curriculum plans, to select content that builds on pupils' prior knowledge.
- Occasionally, teachers do not emphasise the most important knowledge that pupils should learn. As a result, some pupils do not retain this knowledge and develop the foundations they need for future learning. Subject leaders should ensure that they monitor the implementation of curriculum plans regularly to make sure that pupils learn the important subject content that leaders have identified.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	121517
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10252147
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	33
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sam Wilmington
Headteacher	Marie Mann
Website	http://fed-mas.n-yorks.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	1 and 2 May 2019

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Federation of Middleham (VA) and Spennithorne (VC) primary schools. Pupils who attend this school are dual registered at Middleham Church of England Aided School.
- Both schools in the federation are led by one executive headteacher. Subject leaders and the school's special educational needs coordinator work across both sites.
- Children in early years and key stage 1 are educated at the Spennithorne Church of England Primary School site. Pupils in key stage 2 are educated at the Middleham Church of England Aided School site. A school bus is used to transport pupils from their registered school to the site where they are educated.
- The most recent section 48 inspection for schools with a religious character took place in October 2016.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher and members of the school's leadership team, including the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, history and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited samples of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Curriculum leaders were involved in all activities alongside inspectors.
- An inspector held a meeting with members of the governing body.
- An inspector spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- An inspector spoke to a representative from Anglican Leeds Diocese.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents related to safeguarding and spoke to the school's designated safeguarding lead.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke to parents and carers informally on the playground.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Tim Scargill-Knight, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Alex Thorp	His Majesty's Inspector
Malcolm Kirtley	Senior His Majesty's Inspector

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